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THE RABBINATE OF THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE,
LONDON, FROM 1756-1842.

By C. DUSCHINSKY, London.

APPENDIX VI

TRANSLATION OF LETTERS I-IX.

Letter I. Fol. 1 a.

London, 21 Adar, 5536 (1776).

PEACE to my brother the Dayyan, &c., R. Meir, and to his wife and daughter. Amen!

In order to keep the promise I made you in my letter of eight days ago, namely, that I should answer you at length with reference to that^{169f} (certain) Rabbinate, although your words are very veiled I gather that you have recommendations to that place from important people. You have not told me who they are, but I suppose you would not make so much of it without reason. For, indeed, in Hamburg there are many scholars to be found who are fit for that high position, and the Copenhagen congregation always gravitates towards Hamburg. Nevertheless, you are right. 'Do not despise anything' as our sages say,¹⁷⁰ and especially if you have anything to rely upon to build (your hopes) on that ground. I have therefore considered how I, likewise, could be of help to you in the matter, but see, I have only found one man here who has a direct correspondent to Ch. (= Copenhagen), and that is a certain rich

^{169f} The words added in brackets are supplemented by me, where literal translation of the Hebrew text would be difficult to understand otherwise.

¹⁷⁰ Mishna Abot IV, 3.

man, the Parnas of the Hamburg Synagogue here. This is the very man who in those days brought the Rabbi of the Hamburg Synagogue here,¹⁷¹ and he is still attached to him like a brother. I dare not disclose to this man even as much as a hair's breadth, for the family of H. Z. (Haham Zevi) will soon find one of their relations whom they will want to recommend there, and I must keep the whole matter secret. Here it is like in the land of the South,¹⁷² and nobody knows unto this day, except for those to whom I had communicated it as a great secret, that the Rabbinate of Ch. is vacant. However, I could not leave it at that and do nothing for you; and I have on Friday last written by post to R. Meir Hanover a letter, a copy of which you will find on the attached page. There lives here also a certain R. Moses Walich, who has written to his wife's stepmother, the widow of the late R. David Hanover, who is a native of Copenhagen. Also R. Zalman Hanover, the son-in-law of my cousin R. G. (Gershon?) Klef (Cleve), whose first wife was her sister, (and consequently) likewise a native of Ch.—he, R. Zalman, will surely stand by you (help you) if your brother-in-law R. M.(eir) Klef will ask him. Influential Hamburg people could, I think, do much, as Hamburg is like a suburb of Copenhagen. Probably you will get best help through people who have correspondents from there to here. As far as I personally am concerned I have nobody to whom I could write direct, unless I do it through those rich men whom I have already mentioned, and to inform these, I

¹⁷¹ Was responsible for his election. Hamburg Synagogue = Hambro Syn.

¹⁷² In Palestine they called far-off countries the 'land of the South'; cf. Isa. 30. 6 and 7; Dan. chap. 11, where Egypt is termed 'the south'; it also means 'a dry land'; cp. Talm. B. Temurah 16a.

fear, would even be harmful, instead of helping the matter. Others would not move (do anything) because it does not concern me personally. After consultation with my cousin the Parnas Aaron Goldschmid, he agreed [to my suggestion] and is writing by to-day's post to his sister's son Jacob, son of Mendele Kik in Hamburg. He (Goldschmid) tells me that this nephew of his is under obligations to him, being his correspondent unto this day, and in former times had great benefits from him. R. Aaron told me I should make a concept of what he should write, and he will copy it word for word. And so I did, and a copy of it is annexed to this letter. R. Aaron tells me furthermore that his nephew is a great merchant, and quite certain to have correspondents in Copenhagen. You need not think that the words of R. A. will only be listened to like 'wise words of a poor man'.¹⁷³ I wish that we both, you and I, had as much as he has, we would not be obliged to be Rabbis at all. As a matter of fact he is in the same honourable position as before. This is all I could think of doing on your behalf, and God must help. Still you have acted properly in writing to me. In these matters it is, as I had occasion to experience in the days when I endeavoured to obtain the Rabbinate here, as the saying goes, 'A small stone is also necessary to build a wall'; the chief thing, however, is the foundation on which the wall is built. Your suggestion that I should write to the [fol. 1 b] congregation direct, you cannot have meant seriously, and does not appeal to me. A few years ago there was a single young man from Ch. here, belonging to one of the rich families, and he came several times to my house. I thought (now) to renew an old acquaintance,

¹⁷³ Cp. Eccles. 9. 9.

as probably by now he would be married, and intended writing him whether he could do me a favour in this matter. In the course of the letter I might have mentioned that it is not usual to write to the whole congregation, but he was at liberty to show my letter to the congregation. I would have had an opportunity in any case to praise you at length before the community. However, after making inquiries among the members of my congregation from the people where he used to live while staying here, I heard that all his people had died after having lost their fortune, and they are now forgotten. So this plan has also fallen to the ground. In Amsterdam I am a stranger as far as letters go, just as regards Hamburg and Ch., and as for writing through an intermediary I have already said above that it would be more harmful than useful, so there is nothing more to add about what I have done. God, the Merciful, may grant us well-being, and with all good wishes I conclude. Peace and life may you have from God according to the wish of your brother, Tebele C'z¹⁷⁴ Schiff.

My son the Baḥur (single man) Mose the Priest sends you his regards, he also has done something in the matter by copying the enclosed letters. Your sister-in-law, the virgin Mindle, also sends greetings, and would also like to help for good (= to achieve a good result in the matter).

To our venerable father you may tell of the prospect if you think it advisable to tell him of this letter.

¹⁷⁴ C'z = י"צ, a Cohanite.

Letter II. Fol. 2 a.

Copy (of the letter sent) to Rabbi M. Hanover.

17 Adar, 5536.

Ever since I came to this country I have been contemplating how I could return to you, my dear relative, the good services you have done me by your recommendation at the time I endeavoured to obtain the Rabbinate here (in London), but I never found occasion for a *revanche*. I wish I would find some means (to show you my thanks) in whatever way it may be.

I have now, however, occasion to ask you for another favour similar to the one mentioned. I have heard the Rabbinate of Copenhagen is vacant, and my brother, the efficient Dayyan R. Meir Schiff of Frankfort, aspires to that position. As to his being worthy of the position, although I, as his brother, am disqualified to bear witness, it is beyond question, any one can tell you that he has acquired fame as a sound scholar in the religious codes and casuistics. I know that you, my friend, have great influence in the said community, your words are of weight with the honoured men of that town, and I ask you therefore, if I have found favour in your eyes and the idea itself also appeals to you, that you may kindly recommend my brother. Apart from the certainty that you will earn reward for it from Heaven and thanks from the people, you will also oblige me personally.

Although I cannot excuse myself sufficiently for troubling you with this, it seems to me a sign, as you my friend with God's help have been of great assistance to me in the appointment as Rabbi here, and through that my brother was elected in my place as Dayyan in Frankfort—perchance

it is the will of the Almighty that you should be His messenger in this affair likewise, to help him (my brother) obtain the safe harbour of that Rabbinate. I will not trouble you any further, but in conclusion ask you not to refuse to comply with my request, but to use your great influence (as far as you can). I shall in return be always ready to do you any service if occasion arises, and, as I have already said, I am already in your debt for the great service you have done to me personally, and with all my power I shall try to serve you to your best interest.

Letter III.

Copy of the letter of the Parnas Aaron Goldschmidt to his sister's son, the honoured R. Jacob Kik in Hamburg.

21 Adar, 5536. London.

... I have also a favour to ask of you, my dear nephew. I have heard, namely, that the community of Copenhagen intends to elect a Rabbi. There is in Frankfort a Rabbi, the Dayyan R. Meir Schiff, brother of the Rabbi of our congregation, my cousin Rabbi Tevele Schiff. That Rabbi is looking out for such a post, and has already many recommendations from influential people. He is indeed worthy of the position as he is a great Talmudic scholar, at home in that vast literature and of great intellect, and has also other great qualities. Although he has not been a (Chief) Rabbi hitherto, he is Dayyan in Frankfurt, and many congregations have elected Dayyanim of Frankfort as their Rabbis, as we did here, for our Rabbi, my cousin R. Tevele, was likewise only Dayyan in Frankfort, and still we have, thank God—as is known far and wide—done well in selecting him, may God prolong his days! To tell

you the truth, in those days everything was done through (by) me, because I had received a recommendation from our late uncle R. Johanan and, thank God, I succeeded, as it is known here in the whole community that practically I alone was instrumental in carrying through his election.

I should now like to do a similar service to his brother, my cousin the Dayyan R. Meir C'z, in helping him to obtain the Rabbinate in the said community. I have, however, no correspondent at present in that city, but you, my dear nephew, have very likely many good friends in Ch., and I would like you to do the same that I have done and take an interest in the matter by sending recommendations there. I can assure you that, if good results are achieved, you will only derive great honour from it, and I shall be very much obliged to you. Naturally my cousin, our revered Rabbi, will also be glad and ready to serve you in return for this favour; please do therefore your utmost, dear nephew, by direct recommendations to Ch. as well as through those of your friends. You will give me great pleasure and I shall be pleased to do the same for you.

Letter IV. Fol. 1 a.

London. Friday, New Moon of Ijjar, 5540.

Peace to my brother the eminent Dayyan Rabbi Meir C'z and to his wife, my dear sister-in-law, and to all who belong to them!

Your letter of Nisan the 8th duly received, and on the next page I have answered you in the halakic matter. It was not my intention to criticize you, but only to show you that I have perused your words from beginning to

end, and derived great pleasure from it on the last festival in seeing proofs of your clear mind and deep thoughts. To tell you the truth, in short notes like these we can continue to write to one another, but in more extensive and deeper subjects I am like 'in the land of the south'.¹⁷⁵ I have no colleagues nor pupils to study with, and even no one to whom I can talk on these matters when you write me anything, and cannot go into it as thoroughly as I ought to. Sometimes it occurs the other way, that I enlarge at length upon a nice 'Derush' (homiletic explanation) or a halakic point, and then I find it difficult to copy it all. I have found nobody to help me even in this respect. If therefore you or I will find some time or other a new point of interest (in our studies) we shall not deny ourselves the pleasure of communicating it to one another in brevity, and for the present we shall not discontinue to deal from time to time with the matter of the Gabbaim,¹⁷⁶ and settle this by frequent correspondence. We must not put it off and say, 'I shall learn when I have the time', although we find that even our Amoraim said 'We beg of you not to come to us at a certain time',¹⁷⁷ and although there is a difference between their case and ours, still there is a slight resemblance.

Now to answer your letter point by point. Our account is settled. I was surprised that you made an alteration

¹⁷⁵ Cp. Temurah 16 a.

¹⁷⁶ Referring to R. Meir Schiff's dispute with Meir Rothschild. See above, and Appendix VII.

¹⁷⁷ Cp. Berakot 35 b. Raba said to the other scholars, 'Do not appear before me in the days of Nisan and Tishri, so that you may not be occupied with your search for a living during the whole year'. R. Tevele asks his brother to settle his dispute as soon as possible, in order not to have to trouble about it later, and compares it to this Talmudic saying.

in my order and gave 18 ג"ד (=Groschen) to my brother-in-law Hayyim and deducted them from the amount I sent for the widow. If even what a poor man left over belongs to the same poor man and must be given to him, the more so he ought not to be deprived of that which has specially been sent to him, and by right you ought to refund the money from your own. I have, however, pity on you, and herewith order you to give 18 Groschen to the widow. Apart from the 18 Gr. you have already given to my brother-in-law on my account, please give him fl. 5 from me, and thus you will have laid out fl. 6. 12. The cheque from Vienna will probably have reached you by now. As regards the Rabbi of the Hamburger (congregation), all is at an end. From hour to hour he begged the community to allow him to remain; nevertheless they insist upon what they decided, to give him £50 yearly for life. He is leaving next week, and your astonishment still holds good, why I should have to do everything without being paid for it, apart from presents (מתנות) on Purim and Rosh-Hashana from those who were in the habit of remembering me on those occasions (I have no income from the Hambro Synagogue). As to weddings, it is now usual with them, in accordance with an order from their Board of Management, that the parents of the bridal couple have the choice, and can take either me or their Hazan. As the Hazanim—wrongly—flatter their congregants, I did not, during the whole of last year, perform more than one wedding ceremony, and that was on the occasion of the marriage of the daughter of R. Leb Tosca (טושקא), who is a friend and like a brother to me, a learned, respected, and very rich man, inquire about him of R. Moses Munk. This R. Leb and many

others of the respected men (of the Hambro Synagogue) think that in time the right to perform wedding ceremonies will fall exclusively to me, but at present it is still far from that. It may be that in time some newcomers will also send me presents at the periods mentioned (namely פורים and ר"ה), but a separate salary from that congregation is not to be expected. It might be that my community will ask the Hamburger congregation for a contribution towards the salary they give me, namely, the £200 a year, and according to my opinion they will be able to tear out of them £50, but of that not one penny will go into my pocket, but even with that I am satisfied because, as I have already written you, the salary of £200 I have from the congregation is insecure, and at every meeting of the Kahal they spoke about reducing the salary of the Rav and of other officials of the congregation, on account of the increase in the expenses and reduction of the income. In short, were I to write you many sheets full, you would still not understand the way of this town. You imagine London is a Kehilla (community). No! Far from it! Justly as you write, there are many things it is difficult for you to understand (find answers for), &c. I have understood your hint, and could explain all in a very simple manner to any one who knows the way of this town and about me (the nature of my position), but it is impossible to do it in writing. I swear (assure you on oath), So may I see plenty of joy, that I long to see you in joy and happiness here at my house, to speak to you personally and tell you all that is in my heart. I did not unintentionally write you to ask Moses Munk about R. Leb (Toska). I have spoken at length with him on the last Yomtof of this matter, when the said

(R. Leb) was at my house, and I did so in the presence of my son, the Bahur R. Moses ב"ר משה, who is, like me, anxious to achieve this,¹⁷⁸ but he refused point blank (utterly refused), and the refusal of an old and wise man like him means building up, not destruction (= is meant well). I will, D.V., explain to you another time the parts of builder and housebreaker that were played between us, and enough of this for the present. I have spoken with the young man Moses b. Leb Zunz, and he told me he could not imagine that his stepmother and her children, his brothers, were not satisfied with the contribution he is sending them with the help of his brother in America. They probably have received what he sent them for the last Passover. Nevertheless, if his brother who is studying in Pressburg has any particular¹⁷⁹ request to make of his brothers he should write at length and enclose it with your letter. The young man Moses will then pay me the amount (he intends sending to his brother) when the letter is delivered to his hand. I could, if I knew what the request is, recommend the (fulfilment of) same, please God.

With reference to what you wrote about business for my son Moses ב"ר משה, that he should become *commissionnaire* (agent) for the great merchants (famous rich men) the brothers, sons of R. M. S. (Michael Speyer?) and their partner, I have made it my business to make inquiries in the matter, especially as you often wrote that I easily refuse all such proposals. I spoke of it to R. Jacob Rotterdam, who does a lot of commission business to your place, and especially for the well-known partners R. Leb Haas and

¹⁷⁸ Obviously the election of R. Meir as Rabbi to the Hambro Synagogue was in contemplation.

¹⁷⁹ Written פארטיקלאר.

R. J. Schuster, and we came to the conclusion that it would be worth while to be an agent for East Indian goods, but not for woollen merchandise. He does, it is true, do business even in these for the firm of the sons of R. Leb Hanau and his brother-in-law, but it does not pay, because most of the goods which the merchants from there (Frankfort) buy, they order direct by letter from the manufacturers in this country. What a *commissionnaire* sometimes sends there, he must have credit for (here) because all the goods are sold on terms of credit for six months or more; besides, there is the trouble of transit from the country to here and from here (London) to there (Frankfort), and nothing to be profited by it except the commission he gets from there. What you write about understanding (the business) is folly. The samples are sent from the country, the goods are ordered and they are sent according to the samples—some one has told you there a foolish thing that sometimes one might buy from a swindler! That might happen once in seventy years. If that occurs it can only be sold to some one who does business with Amsterdam, where he can find buyers for good and bad goods, but one could not send faulty goods to an established business man there (Frankfort). For this reason only some one who is used to exporting goods, woollen or East Indian, could become a commission-agent for woollen merchandise manufactured in England, he must be well known here as *commissionnaire*, like the said R. J(acob) or other people who are used to it.

Page 1 b.

If the young man Süsskind, son of Jacob Schloss, has already left, do not frighten his family. If, however, he

is still there, tell him that Leb Binga (Bingen) wishes to be remembered to him, and would like to add to the letter which he has by now received from him—dated here on the eve of the last days of Passover (20 Nisan)—that since a few days it is spoken of again that Parliament will put pressure (on Jewish travellers?) like last year, and he has the choice whether he will come here or not. In any case if he does make up his mind to come, he should see to it that in the passport he obtains from the government authorities there, should be said more than is usually said in a health-pass (certificate), and, if possible, should be added that he is a Schutz-Jude from there who travels thither as a merchant to buy goods. Please do not fail to let him have this message in full if he is still there, but if he has already left, your silence will be better than words, and God may bless his journey.

If he does intend to come here or has already left, I expect to receive the mantle through him, and if not (send it) without delay according to the order in my last letter.

I am waiting to receive on behalf of some one here from the Rabbi of the Province of Würzburg the sum of two hundred gulden or somewhat less, a legacy left to him. I have already sent to the Rabbi the receipt and letter of indemnity attested by me, and have at the same time ordered that the money should be sent to you for me, and that your acceptance of the same shall be regarded as if it were already received by me, if you give a receipt for the amount handed over to you, D.V. I herewith ask you that if such amount be offered to you, to accept it on my behalf and to give a receipt, and afterwards send it to me by assignment without a moment's delay, the full

amount—do not deduct the account which we have with one another. Send me a separate letter expressly in this matter. I shall get the postage refunded here.

Apart from this I will only repeat what I have already said, that you should try to settle the matter with the Gabbaim without hesitation, as well as the letting of the house, so that I should get it off my mind, and that you should be sure of what you get as reward for your trouble. Otherwise there is no more (news), only life and peace (may be granted to you) from the Lord and (wishes for the same) from me your brother who greets you and desires your welfare. Tebele ב"ץ Schiff.

My son the Baḥur Moses ב"ץ sends his regards, he was very pleased with the few lines in your letter which you addressed to him particularly. Your sister-in-law, the maiden Mindel, likewise sends her regards. Greetings to our brother Moses, to our sisters and their children. According to your letter I note the childish remark (שותא דינוקא = children's talk, cf. Sukkah, 56 b) of your daughter Resche. When I send her something with M. Süsskind on his return, she will then have reason to say what she said. For the present I cannot think of what it should be (that I send her). The letter from R. Moses Munk, of last Purim, I received with thanks and send him regards.

Letter V.

London, 14 Elul, 5541.

He who gives life to the living may write and seal (in the book of life) for life my beloved brother the Dayyan (&c.) Rabbi Meir the Priest and his wife the lady Mathe and their daughter Resche. To all who belong to them Peace!

Your letter of the 21st of last month has reached me and I will begin with words of the Torah (and tell you) that you are right. I am not well versed in the laws of finance. Here the Tur Ḥoshen Mishpat and nearly also the Yoreh Deah and Oraḥ Ḥayyim¹⁸⁰ are negligible. Most of the questions refer to the Eben Haezer,¹⁸¹ as I wrote you long ago. At the first glance it would have seemed to me that you are right in every way. On going further into the matter I found other points, and have written you on the other page what occurred to my mind, please read it.

After Torah follows charity. I ask you to send on my account without delay :

To our uncle Rabbi Z. S. in Fuerth	11:00
Ten to your mother-in-law, a cheque for yourself sent by Bearer	25:00
To our brother Moses give in my name eighteen florins	18:00
To the wife of the late Moses Trumm and the wife of Moses Platen, who wrote to me through the young man Z. Oppenheim—to the former one R. Thaler and the latter one florin, together	2:30
To Giessen for the order of R. Abraham ben J. I sent to you eleven florins	11:00
For yourself and for R. Leb the Levite	25:00
To my brother-in-law Ḥayyim the Levite send on my account five florins	5:00
Total	<u>97:30</u>

¹⁸⁰ Parts of the four Turim, a ritual Code by Jacob ben Assher dealing with civil, dietary laws, and rules of prayer and festivals respectively.

¹⁸¹ The part of the Tur dealing with laws of marriage, divorce, &c.

From last year the account between us stands (as follows):

40 from the bill of Moses Bloch and 85 from
M. Oppenheimer according to your letter of
the 19th of Tammuz 43:36

From Jehiel Cohen after deducting netto
eleven New Thaler for your trouble . . . 35:35
79:11

Out of this you have paid for me
Assignment (cheque) to I. Altert (?) 28:45

In accordance with your letter of
Iyyar the 27th to our sister Esther 11:00

On Sivan the 19th to the order of
Abraham of Giessen 11:00

To the Gabbayim (Managers of Poor-
box) 26:20 77:5
2:6

Out of the 97:30 is to be deducted according to your letter of the 36th day of Omer 2:6; remains owing to my brother fl. 95:24, and you will find enclosed an assignment, please let me know how much you obtain for it so that we can note one against the other.

After charity comes Divine Service, which means prayers and good wishes of David to our relative Isaac Speier, who celebrated the marriage of his daughter, (congratulations) to him and to his brother and son-in-law in my name. I have nothing further to add to my letter of the 22nd of Ab. His assignment of eleven shillings has not been presented to me yet.

Referring to your reproaches about Rotterdam, I have already written you that I have not seen any earnest (endeavour) on your part. Proof of it is that you have

not achieved any results there. Secondly, were it not for the unfortunate occurrence with the Rabbi of אַמֶּרְדָם (Amsterdam), I wrote you already who can stand up against them. Thirdly, on account of the war between Holland and this country, the post does not come in regularly. I had just heard that the Rabbi L. of הָשֶׁרֶט (Halberstadt?) was not coming, when soon afterwards, by the next post, I heard that they had elected the Rabbi of Emden. They surely had an intention with this hurry, but enough of these excuses.

I enclose assignment of eight pounds twelve shillings on a certain Yomtof, son of Nathan of Livorno. This (man) is a correspondent of Rabbi Leb the Levite (לֵבִי) from here. He sent him a letter, saying he would be there at the fair, so please inquire, he will easily be found and pay without delay. You may also tell him in the name of the said R. Leb that he wrote him there (to Frankfort) under his address. Being a correspondent of R. Leb the Levite you could invite him to your house out of respect, and speak (to him) well of R. Leb. One of the sons of R. Yomtof will also be there at the fair, and after the fair proceed to here, please send me (with him) half a dozen white cotton caps. Not striped with several colours but simply white ones. Also half a dozen handkerchiefs which keep good colour in washing. They must be washed and hemmed there. Do not look for cheap ones but for good quality, but not much white (in them) on account of the snuff-tobacco. Send me also the small book with the memorial sermon of the Rabbi of Prague about the Empress, he will not refuse to bring them here to me.

Apart from this I have no news to-day, and as I began (so I will close), may you be written and sealed (in the

book of life) for ever for life, you, your wife and daughter, our sister, our brother Moses מ"נ (the priest), and the sons of our sisters, also your brothers-in-law. These are the words of your brother who sends greetings, (the small) Tevele the priest. From me and my son Moses to R. Moses Munk greetings and New Year wishes. I received his letter; the lottery begins on Nov. 15, Falk can insure for him and I will be the supervisor for it (= take care of his interest) if he will send me the money in time. With regard to Gumpil May's affair I expect from you (to hear) what has been done in the Din (religious case) of his wife by the Rabbi or by the Beth-Din, also whether there was a decision on the part of the Government (Law-court) in the matter.

(Handwriting of Mindel Sinzheim):

I send many greetings and wish the dear family likewise a happy New Year according to their own wishes. From me, your sister-in-law and sister Mindel, daughter of the late Zalman Sinzheim the Levite.

Page 2 of the letter.

(Postscript by R. Tevele.)

With regard to the white caps, these and the handkerchiefs must be washed there on account of the duty payable here. Also do not forget in your answer words of thanks for Rabbi L. (Leb) the Levite and his wife and sons, assuring them of your best wishes. Leb, son of R. S. (Samuel), Pressburger of Vienna, has become engaged to the daughter of my relative R. Aaron א"נ (Goldschmid) from here. (Here one written line has been made unreadable by penstrokes.) If you, in your answer to me will

send him greetings and Masoltow (congratulations) you may do so.

Letter VI.

London, 14 Elul, 5541.

He, who lives for ever and remains for eternity, He may write and seal for ever for life my dear uncle the efficient Rabbi Meir מ"ר and his wife and daughter, Amen. May to all who belong to him be Peace!

The days of reckoning and payment have come, when we pay with our lips instead of with offerings, raise our voice to God that He may answer us on the day of grace and help us on the day of salvation, and I offer my prayers to God for him (you) and his house that He may impress on their heads the sign of life and bring to light their righteousness, lead them on paths of (life's) waters, and we may see in her beauty Zion the town of our testimony, the splendid place where wolf and lamb will graze together and not do evil any more, where they will welcome the reprimander in the gate and the speaker of truth and abhor the rebuke of the foolish man, and the one and only Shepherd will guard them, a righteous heart and new spirit will the Almighty give to all who revolted against Him, sinned and forsook Him, so that they will not err any more either to right or left, but He will make us firm and strengthen us, so may it be God's will, Amen.

I cannot refrain to inform you of the great honour we had in these days . . . (follows a private family incident).

What happened with R. Isaac the Ḥazan I have already written you at length, that they have taken his crown from him and he may not stand any more in his holy place. Now, however, that the Atonement day is

coming, many stand up to say a good word for him to bring him back to his old position, saying the wrong he did was done on account of a man ("ן) Ḥayyim, who led him astray, and thus many plead in his favour. And as is usually the way in the Kehillot (= congregations) they took to the old doings (= ways) of their fathers, and what the one likes the other dislikes, this one says this, the other something else, and some say neither this nor that. As it is R. Isaac is still in prison and cannot move about like a free man, because he was made bankrupt, and according to the law of the land must have the majority of his creditors (namely, to consent to his liberation) whom he will scarcely bring under one hat (to agree to that). It is not an honour for the congregation, but outcasts like these are not to be found in any other town—and it is all in vain. It is only that leaven in the dough which hinders everything, it is that man who always creates strife and cannot sleep if he has not done some harm. But God helps the persecuted, and the advice was given by the congregation, that R. Isaac should take a large sheet and write what is called a Memorial, and bring this document as soon as possible to the judges. In this memorial they wrote that the congregation has reserved his position for him, and that he was really being punished on account of R. H. Now the time was pressing, he cannot help himself, and without him (the judge) nobody can raise hand or foot, and by his word only they can come and go, therefore he implores him that the mouth that has imprisoned may liberate again, &c. So far, his answer is still expected, and on his answer and wisdom the community relies. We shall see what he will answer, please God.

I will now close with what I began. God may send help to the righteous and be a shield for those who walk in purity. May He raise our lot and may life and peace come to you from God the living Master of the worlds. So will pray for ever your nephew Moses, son of the great Gaon R. Tevele Schiff. To all our family greetings and New Year wishes, especially to my aunts and their children, may God guard them, also my uncle Moses. I also send regards to your brothers-in-law L. and I. the Levites, may they likewise be blessed by God thousand times, Amen.

Letter VII (p. 1 a).

London, 22 Adar, 5542.

To my brother the Dayyan R. Meir, &c.

I have duly received your letter of Adar 6, and I have to repeat what I have already said : Leave off with this ! It is impossible for me to help you, I have enough to do to keep myself. My income at present has diminished so far, that with difficulty only can I make both ends meet, and it is getting less every day. Were it not for the little (income) I receive in interest from Government Loan I could not exist, as the expenses increase on account of the war, the taxes are great and heavy, and for other causes. My salary of £200 is not being paid me punctually, and every moment I have to expect that it will be reduced. It is not, as you seem to think, that I am not on good terms with them, on the contrary, I have many of the leaders as my friends, who appreciate me and are anxious for my welfare. The gist of the matter is, and I am surprised at you, how do you imagine to be able to understand a place which neither you nor your forefathers

knew. As little as anybody in another land understands this war, the ways of the Parliament and the powers of the king here—even what the papers will write there now about peace with America—as little will any one understand the ways of the Kehilla and anything about my income and expenditure. Who likes may believe it, and he who does not may forbear, and if there still remains some apprehension in your heart, which I hope will not be the case, I tell you: Far be it from you to sin in this way, and enough of this.

In the matter which concerns myself I must write you something remarkable. About a month ago I received a letter from the Rabbi of Prague and his Beth-Din concerning some business (religious matter), and among the (signatures of) the Dayyanim I found the signature of R. Levi Fanto, and gathered therefrom that he had not gone to Würzburg, and I wrote on the 17th of Shebat to the Parnas Moses Rofe, an acquaintance and relative of mine, who, however, had become (a little) estranged from me. The chief point of my letter was a request to let me know, as none of the three Rabbis elected by his congregation had gone there, whether the reason for this was that the income from the Rabbinate had become worse of late than it used to be in former years. I also wrote him that if he would tell me all the circumstances I would write him at length and draw his attention to some one who was willing to accept the Rabbinate, and whose appointment would bring honour to his congregation. I made an allusion to myself, and the contents as well as the form of the letter were written in very pleasing style and language, and I hoped to receive a favourable reply. On the Sunday, the 26th of Shebat,

however, came the news that the packet-boat which left here with the mail of the 17th of Shebat had been attacked and captured by the enemy, and the letters were thrown into the sea. I then said to myself—without intention of losing an opportunity—that it may be a sign (from God) that the letter was lost, and did not write again, but now when your letter came, in which, among other news, you wrote that the Rabbinate of Würzburg was still vacant, I said again that it might be a sign in the opposite direction, and I expect from you a full answer (to let me know) what you think and your advice without keeping back anything. With Almighty rests the knowledge of what is good for me and my son, for body and soul, everything else is only the commentary, go and study (think it over). If you approve of the idea I herewith give you permission to do with God's help the work of man, according to your power, and let me know.

I can easily answer your inquiry about the late David Fridland. Many years ago, when the Gaon Rabbi G(ershon) Chief Rabbi of Moravia,¹⁸² may his memory be a blessing, was still alive, I received a letter of recommendation from him, asking me to speak with the said David about the wife and children of his late brother Jeckl. I then wrote to the country place where this David lived, and he did according to my wish and sent, through me, an amount of money to Nikolsburg, and from that time dates my knowledge of the man and his lot. Some time afterwards arrived here the son of his brother Jeckl, whose name was Isaac. I sent him with a letter of recommendation to his uncle, but he did not help him much, according to what

¹⁸² R. Gerson Pulitz, Chief Rabbi of Moravia, 1753-72. See Kaufmann, *Gedenkbuch*, p. 379, and the literature given there in note 1.

he told me, but every time he assured him that after his death he would leave him an amount according to the law of heritage of the Torah. As David grew old and was nearly eighty, he became blind, his property was neglected and partly lost, and what remained was in very bad state (בנכסי רטושין), like abandoned property,¹⁸³ which nobody looks after, as he was here in a strange land without friends, and had never been married (added in the margin 'and was afraid he might be thrown on public charity'). He decided to give all he had to a rich¹⁸⁴ (אמיר) man in the country, and made an agreement in the Law Court with this man that he should undertake to give him all he wants (= keep him) as long as he lives, and after his death he should give a certain sum to his nephew, the said Isaac. In exchange for this undertaking he ceded all he had to that man, and lived afterwards for a few years. On his death the said Isaac had disputes with the man who declined to give him what he had undertaken to pay him in the said agreement, but as Isaac wanted to get married—as indeed he did marry soon after he received the money—he came to an understanding with him (and accepted a lesser amount). This is how it all happened, and since then it is like a stone thrown into a well to expect for any one of the relations any help from that legacy.

(Added later, and addressed to Isaac Speyer): I still owe an answer to my cousin the famous קצין, our friend R. Isaac Speyer, to his letter full of valuable information, which I received about a month ago, and I send greetings to him and all his people. What I mentioned in my first letter that he will do it without commission is not to be understood otherwise than (that I expected this) from our

¹⁸³ See Arakin 25 a.

¹⁸⁴ Verbally 'valued', viz. to be rich.

friendship for one another, because I know that he will use all his power to do either of us a good service, it is like, as in water, face answering face.¹⁸⁵ While I write it occurs to me (to mention) that he surely will not mind the trouble and inconvenience connected with it that I am sending to-day to my brother, our friend R. Meir C'z, a cheque of £7 on a certain man, who, however, might not be there at the next fair. I therefore request my dear cousin to give to my brother on my account fl. 75, and, as you have already given me credit for fl. 66, to assign the whole amount to me, and if you should have to pay to my brother the said fl. 75 to draw a cheque on me for both together of fl. 141, and to excuse the trouble I have given. I promised to write some news (אנאוערנא . . .), and will mention that yesterday a great firm of bankers, namely Brown and Collinson, have gone bankrupt, and the public, Jews and non-Jews, have had great confidence in them. They had tens of thousands (of pounds) in hand, because, as is the custom here, they held cash deposits from the public, and now people are very anxious lest other cashiers, who are called bankers here (other firms will be involved), and it is feared that one friend will have another. For the present it is quiet, and it may be advisable to put on Rotterdam (lottery?).¹⁸⁶

To return again to our account. Enclosed is an assignment from R. Leb the Levite on Asher b. Yomtof of Livorno for the sum of £7; the latter left here about a month ago, and promised to be there at the fair, nevertheless, see what I wrote to my cousin (Isaac Speyer).

¹⁸⁵ Cp. Prov. 27. 19.

¹⁸⁶ This part of the letter is intended for Isaac Speyer; what follows is again addressed to his brother R. Meir.

P. 1 b.

Follows also an assignment from R. Jacob Rotterdam on the firm Jacob Hommel and partners for £7; let me know in your answer how much you received for it, also if the said R. Asher should pay you the £7, how much you received for that. In your answer tell me also exactly all your expenses for the Sefer Torah to the last penny, how much you paid to the Sofer (scribe), and how much to the corrector, so that I can tell R. Leb the Levite and settle with him; send me therefore the receipts from the Sofer and corrector.

The account between us is, according to my letter of 20th of Kislev, as follows:

Remained in your hand after paying the Sofer
thirty florins fl. 4:40

To this add the proceeds of the two assignments,
or else the fl. 75 you will receive for
the cheque on R. Asher. On the other
hand I have to pay you a further forty
florins for the Sofer apart from corrector's
fee fl. 40:00

You have already paid to your mother-in-law,
my sister-in-law, a cheque of fl. 11, and on
Adar 19 I will assign for her fl. 25 (together) fl. 36:00

Payment to you as usual every half year for
yourself and R. Leb מ"ל fl. 25:00

Ditto to R. Abraham Gissa (Giessen) drawn on
you to-day fl. 11:00

Ditto to send to our uncle R. Zekl מ"ל on my
account fl. 11, and give to our brother
Moses from me fl. 15 (together) . . . fl. 26:00

This makes, apart from the corrector's fee, a
total sum of fl. 138

Please look into this account carefully and answer me punctually with a detailed account, as you know I am a great lover of orderliness. Concerning the sending of the Sefer Torah, R. Leb סג"ל tells me that, as he is very busy, he will entrust with it R. Asher when, as is probable, he will be there at the fair, and so it does not concern us any more. You may keep the Sofer Torah with you until you receive further order from me or from R. Leb to R. Asher.

That Abraham Emmerich has gone bankrupt seems to me like a firebrand in a cedar.

I am, however, not familiar with the circumstances of the merchants there, and only in one case I require to know the standard of the people, and that is with reference to the eminent people on whom I send you cheques herewith, namely, their fathers.¹⁸⁷

Enclosed is a letter for the wife of the late R. Leb Zunz from her stepson R. Moses, which is to be delivered into her own hand because there is a bill of exchange in the letter.

Zanvil b. Judah of Leinich (Leineck?) has had a letter now from R. Leb the Levite that he should call on you for fl. 11. When he calls pay him and obtain a receipt. These eleven florins are already accounted for between us in my letter of 20th Kislev.

This letter is dated 22 Adar, but I have written it a day earlier, as on the 22nd is the anniversary of the death of our late father, and I shall be weak on account of the fast and the sleepless night, and while I mention our father of blessed memory I am answering your words of Torah on the annexed page, which may be for the benefit of his soul. As I say there, I have only briefly answered your

¹⁸⁷ This reference is not quite clear.

question, and as chief subject I have treated my own question, seeing that you are engaged in the study of Tractate Baba Batra. I have, thank God, collected good notes on this tractate at various times (chiefly) when I taught in Worms, namely, answers to all questions which Tosafot ask on Rashi's commentary, and also on every other subject (in that tractate). I intended copying for you some of these novellae, but they are for the most part lengthy, and so I have only selected one and copied it.

With this I will conclude. Peace be with you from Almighty according to the wish of your brother Tevele C'z Schiff. My son Moses and your sister-in-law Mindele send greetings, in particular to your wife, my sister-in-law, maybe your sister-in-law Mindele will add a few lines herself. Greetings to our brother Moses and our sisters and their families.

(In Mindel Sinzheim's hand): Dear beloved sister, I was very, very pleased to hear that you are again in good health, may Almighty God grant it to continue thus, until a great age. This is the prayer of your sister Mindel, daughter of the late R. Solomon Sinzheim the Levite.

To my brother-in-law likewise, and especially to my niece Res'che, to my brother Simon, and naturally also to brother Joseph, greetings. I assure you all that no one is more anxious for the welfare of the family than I, although I can at present only express it in words. May God help me to be able to prove it soon personally there (in Frankfort). This is an answer to sister Mate's latest letter.

Letter VIII.

London, 20 Elul, 5582.

(Page 1 a).

He who forms the destiny of man like clay may write into the book of life for life my dear brother the Dayyan Meir, &c., his wife and daughter, &c.

Last Tuesday your answer reached me—the date is missing—to my letter of the 12th Ab, and referring to what you mention therein of your own affairs, and that our cousin the charitable R. Isaac Speyer has done your wish, I enclose on the other side a letter of thanks to him for all the trouble he has taken in my interest. My opinion about the matter itself I will tell you here, and my words are addressed also to him. You wrote that the aspect of the congregation is changed, and I am sorry for the place and the graves of my Fathers. As to our own affair, you write that many members of the congregation have left and taken up their abode in some neighbouring place. Maybe I should have done the same had I lived there at present, nevertheless, evil times are bound to be over some time, and so I feel it my duty to see that our right in the community should not be interrupted for the generations to come. I will now refer to your words one after the other: you write that the children (heirs) of R. M. Scheyer have all signed already—it is necessary to inquire after those who live in other congregations but have the right of domicile there. R. J. Kulpa, you wrote, has already signed, that is well. That Lima b. Zalman Haas will naturally sign seems to me likewise very probable; in any case it is not too late. R. D(avid) Kassel, the son-in-law of the wife of R. Z. K., you say, will not and

must not sign; in course of time, however, there is no doubt that he will sign. (This remark) does not please me, because who knows what happens in the meantime. As to that well-known cruel man (who suggests) that his brothers should sign a pre-dated bill in favour of the joint firm—falsehood will not prevail, especially as his inclination is too strong, as is well known his way is to begin strife. The more likely is he to do so, if one were to prove to him his dishonest words, then he would at once start a law-suit in his anger. You never mentioned Henle Kulpa. I believe he was also a debtor at the time when the community allowed you (your debt) on account of your right (of residence) in the community, (and) the debt of my late brother-in-law, R. Z(alman), was paid off, or, I am not sure, on your own account alone. After all, although your words are full of sagacity and piety, the Mizwah would be great (if a result were achieved), and it were better to keep quiet so that this poor woman should not be wronged as time goes on. What shall I further question you, our Father in Heaven has decreed that I should have a different opinion to yours in this, and as the proverb says, 'fear cannot be talked away'. In spite of this we have in these days come nearer to one another in thought and deeds than (we were) for many years. Let this be now a rule between us, please God, to have in future frequent correspondence in the rôles of builder and house-breaker (= discussion *pro* and *contra*) in this matter, and 'he who wants to purify himself receives help from Heaven'. May God help us for good, I am sure that you will not neglect this and do all you can, as I am most anxious to settle the matter favourably.

Enclosed is an assignment from R. L(eb) K... to Asher

b. Yomtof of Livorno of seven pounds sterling; it is dated already from July because that gentleman left town at the time and will not return before close to the festivals, and he left the assignment with me to collect the amount. Please let me know how much you received for it.

Out of this I have assigned to your mother-in-law in the name of the bearer of assignment on 10 Elul	fl. 25
17 Elul, drawn upon you to the order of Abraham Giessa	fl. 11
To our brother Moses give in my name	fl. 16
To our uncle R. Z. S. in Fürth send in my name .	fl. 11
For yourself and for R. Leb the Levite thirty florins, which includes an addition of five florins for your trouble in connexion with the Sefer Torah	fl. 30
For the wife of Mosès Platz and the wife of Moses Trumm and the daughter of Moses Trumm together, equally divided between them, for each 2 Gr.	fl. 2
Total	fl. 95

A few weeks ago I received a letter from R. M(eir?) b. S. the Levite, and in the postscript his uncle Hirsch Haas assured me that he will stand by you, and it need not be mentioned that R. M. himself and his brother will also stand by you. R. Madl wrote to me that he, as well as his uncle, will speak to R. Jacob Kann, but nevertheless he advised me in his letter that I should personally write to R. J(acob) K(ann) as he might hear that I wrote to his brother-in-law Hirsch and not to him, and might be offended. After I have written to R. J. he will support me by speaking to him. I have done so to-day, and written at length and with special emphasis my request to R. Jacob Kann, and have enclosed it with the letter

which I sent to R. M. to-day, and reminded him to fulfil his promise. Kindly note this.

As to the Sefer Torah, I have received a letter from Romburg of Ostend that he handed it over to the shipper three weeks ago; it has not arrived yet, but is due any day now.

With reference to the happenings in Berlin, all about the Rabbi's departure from there is known here, and I have seen a copy of the letter which he left before he journeyed from there with instructions to open it six days after he left the town. According to what I hear he is now in Vienna, and from the letter it appears that his intention is to emigrate to the Holy Land. I have also seen the copy of a letter from the Rabbi of Lissa to the Rabbi of Amsterdam, as well as the copy of a sermon delivered by the Rabbi of Lissa in this matter, where he condemns R. H. Wesel (Wessely), and the letter which he printed. The sermon is in very pure language, full of pious and wise words, careful not to offend the majesty of the Emperor. From the letter and sermon I gather that they did the same in Posen, and in Wilna they burnt R. H. Wesel's letter outside the town by order of the famous Gaon Elijah.^{187a} Mention is also made there that the Rabbi of Prague at first preached against it at Prague, now, how-

^{187a} Cp. Güdemann in *Monatsschrift*, 1870, pp. 479-80, and Wessely's own letter in *Kerem Hemed*, vol. I, pp. 5-6 and *Kobez-al-Jad*, vol. X, p. 75. Wessely himself mentions in *Kerem Hemed* the Rabbi of Posen, 'son-in-law of the Rabbi of Prague', the Rabbi of Lissa, and Rabbi Elijah Ḥasid of Wilna, as having issued a Ḥerem against him. The Rabbi of Lissa was R. David Tevele Horochow, a native of Brody, about whom cp. Lewin, *Gesch. d. Juden in Lissa*, pp. 195 and 200. The Rabbi of Posen was R. Joseph, known as 'Hazaddik' ben Pineḥas, son-in-law of R. Ezekiel Landau. Cp. Perles: *Gesch. d. Juden in Posen*, *Monatsschrift*, 1865, p. 261. Rabbi Elijah of Wilna is generally known as 'The Gaon of Wilna'.

ever, he is obliged to remain quiet in public, and is working quietly to arouse Rabbis of other famous congregations. After all this it is easily understood that the Berlin Rabbi could not remain in his congregation, and was obliged to leave. If it were possible to send a copy of the declaration issued there I should be pleased to receive it. I will now close in the way I started this letter, may He who dwells in Heaven write you in the book of the righteous for ever for life, may life and peace be with you from Almighty according to the wish and prayer of your brother Tevele C'z Schiff.

As you wrote I should not let anybody write on my letters, I have not allowed your sister-in-law, the maiden Mindel, to write; she wishes you all a happy New Year.

Page 1 b.

(Moses Schiff to R. Meir Schiff.)

Fulfilling the yearly custom at a time when every man in Israel raises his voice praying that happiness may be his lot in the New Year, I send you and all yours greetings from the distance. May the coming year be a happy one in peaceful enjoyment of happy dwellings, may your days be as numerous as the sand on the seashore. This is my priestly wish which God may fulfil, adding to it a thousand times more, your nephew who is always ready to serve you, Moses, son of the great Rabbi Tevele C'z of Frankfurt-on-Main. To your wife and daughter, to my aunts and their families, and to uncle Moses, greetings and good wishes.

In that certain matter my father, the Rabbi, has written you his opinion, and I have no doubt that you will do all you can to bring it to the desired successful issue, and your reward from Heaven will surely not fail to come.

Letter IX (p. 3).

London, Friday, 20 Elul, 5542.

New Year's greetings, &c., . . . to my dear relative . . . R. Isaac, his wife and children, may they all be blessed by God who will confirm the priestly blessing !

How can I thank you sufficiently for all the kindness you have shown to me and to my son during this year. From the worthy has come good, namely, a good beginning in the business, and I have no other power but my words (no other way of thanking you), and I raise my voice to God : Oh, give good reward to that good man, give him name and fame and inscribe him to happy and joyful life, may he rejoice in the welfare of his offspring for many years in Torah and fear of God, in riches and greatness. This may be the will of God in Heaven.

Forgive me that I have not followed your advice, although it was not like that of a man young in years, but like the advice of an elder. I have written on this matter at length to-day to my brother our friend R. Meir C'z, point for point, and it will suffice for both sides (= is meant for you also). It is not right to refuse to listen to a great man like you, and for this reason I have written (what I want to say to you) to my brother, who is a few years younger than I am, and he will explain matters to you in pleasing manner, why it is that I refuse to listen to you although you have taken such great trouble in our interest. I rely upon your friendship and meekness that you will not, even for a single hour, take it amiss, and put aside the true love which we have for one another. On the contrary, I rely upon it that you will be able to settle

the matter with God's help for our benefit. With reference to the legacy of the children of the late R. Leb Klef here, it is still in abeyance whether they will win the case relating to the estate of their grandfather, and even if they do win it, I cannot see a way of obtaining anything for the debtor of their father, as I think that the law of the civil court is the same as our law, and a thousand difficulties are placed in the way of one who makes a claim in his grandfather's right. But time will bring the result, and I will write you further after I have made inquiries from people who are familiar with the civil law. I need not assure you that I will do all in my power to advise you in this, and shall not hesitate to serve you with all my might. Apart from this I have no news. May God bless you with peace and look down at you on the coming New Year day in mercy and kindness. This is the prayer of your cousin who is always ready to serve you, Tevele, son of the late R. Zalman Schiff of Frankfort, Rabbi in London and the Province.

To your brother and son-in-law E. Z. and all who dwell with him I send greetings, may he too be remembered (by God) for good and his years continue, his honour and greatness increase.

(In Moses Schiff's hand): Youths ought to be hidden and not stand before the great and wise men, but you, Sir, have shown to your servant your greatness in assisting the weak. May my prayer be my thanks and bear result, for my pen is not able to write down the immense gratitude I feel for you. I beg of you that if occasion presents itself to remember me again (to put business in my way), and may God Almighty inscribe you into the book of the righteous for a long and happy life. This is the wish of

your servant always at your command, Moses, son of the great Rabbi Tevele C'z Schiff of Frankfort-on-Main. To your brother and son-in-law, the learned R. E. Z., greetings and best wishes for the New Year.

(Address on the outside of the sheet) :

Herrn Maÿer Sallomon

Schiff Jude gegenw. in

Frankfurt am Maÿn.